

water. The egrets, now recognised as the Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*) had their necks extended and the 'undercarriage' (legs and feet) half-way down. We did not actually see them catch a fish but they were no doubt interested in them. The flight was over 400-500 yards. I do not remember having seen or read of an egret or heron fishing in this manner.

The level of the water in the lake was exceptionally low and the anglers were having a field day. Our boat was preceded by a continuous stream of 2-3 inch *Chela* sp., jumping out and skimming along the surface, while an occasional Rohu (*Labeo rohita*) jumped high. A 1-lb Rohu and many *Chela* jumped into the boat.

A week later (11 June) we were there again and saw six or seven Little Egrets regularly fishing in the manner described earlier. This time however, they kept their necks half-drawn in, enabling them to jab at and catch the fish. They flew around in wide circles, often two or three together and appeared to be catching quite a few fish. Two larger egrets (probably *Egretta alba*) and a Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) stayed on the shore and continued to fish in the normal heron/egret style.

FAIZ & Co.,

75, ABDUL REHMAN STREET,

BOMBAY,

June 15, 1967.

HUMAYUN ABDULALI

9. THE WHISTLING TEAL [*DENDROCYGNA JAVANICA* (HORSFIELD)] IN THE CALCUTTA ENVIRONS

Recent notes on the Whistling Teal [*Dendrocygna javanica* (Horsfield)] around Calcutta remind me of the large numbers that it was possible to see in every village pond of any size when I was a student at Shantiniketan and at Calcutta (1914-1924). On the larger pieces of water, flocks of a couple of hundred birds were not uncommon and I must admit that we used to shoot them all the year round. The breeding season must have been about the middle of the rainy season, for from the end of July onwards I saw young ducklings through August to November. I never saw a nest on water and thought that the favourite place was the Screw-Pine or *Keora*, the culms of which used to be found along water-courses and nullahs all over Bengal. The plant is armed with formidable thorns. I remember a teal flying out of the bush of a Screw-Pine which I

was trying to climb for the flowers. The teal flew in a laboured manner for a short distance and then flopped down in a paddy field about 50 feet from me, where it remained flapping its wings. I thought it was an injured bird and the prospect of teal curry prompted me towards it. When I got within a few feet, it rose in laboured flight and flying a short distance flopped down again. I tried to catch it again and it behaved similarly taking me further and further away from the Screw-Pine. It was after a considerable time that it dawned upon me that the teal was drawing me away and the nest was probably in the bush. However by now we had moved far away and it was time to go back to Shantiniketan.

On another occasion I saw from the bank of a small pond a Whistling Teal settle on the open water. From its back 5 or 6 ducklings tumbled into the water after the parent settled.

The birds from the zoo pass over where I stay and large flights may be seen and heard during the cold weather. From early April their numbers appear to diminish, and only small flights of 5 or 10 are seen. Except for the first record of one pair nesting in the rhinoceros paddock (H. A. Fooks; *J. Bombay. nat. Hist. Soc.* 1966, 63: 200) these birds do not nest in the Zoo Gardens, and their dispersal during the breeding season is no doubt responsible for the change in numbers.

10, PARK MANSION,

CALCUTTA-6.

June 1, 1967.

B. BASU

10. ON THE OCCURRENCE OF THE FULVOUSBREASTED
WOODPECKER *DENDROCOPOS MACEI* (VIEILLOT)
IN SIKKIM

Dr. Sálím Ali in THE BIRDS OF SIKKIM says (p. 97) 'The Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos macei macei* (Vieillot), was not met with in Sikkim by the Survey, and apparently neither by Schäfer. According to Stevens it occurs in the Rungbong Valley up to c. 3500 ft., and has been obtained in the Teesta Valley at c. 2400 ft.' This note is to record that there is a female *Dendrocopos macei* (Vieillot) collected by Dr. B. Biswas near Pechreck, 6 km. east of Dentam, Kalet Valley, Sikkim (c. 1400 m.), on 1 Jan. 1953 in the Zoological Survey of India Reserve Collection (Coll. No. BSM. 116).